CLAIMS

The invention claimed is:

1. A computer system for presenting related items in a universal data store to a user, the system comprising:

a universal data store containing a plurality of items stored in accordance with a universal data schema and containing relational information corresponding to at least a portion of said plurality of items, wherein the relational information allows relationships between two or more of the plurality of items to be determined; and

a shell for presenting said plurality of items to a user, wherein the shell is configured to present a selected item to a user and is further configured to utilize said relational information to present one or more items in said data store which are related to said selected item.

- 2. The computer system of Claim 1, wherein the relational information corresponding to one or more of said plurality of items includes a set of item characteristics.
- 3. The computer system of Claim 2, wherein said shell is configured to present one or more of said set of item characteristics to a user.
- 4. The computer system of Claim 2, wherein said shell is configured to accept a user input representing a selection to view one or more items in the data store having one of said item characteristics.

- 5. The computer system of Claim 2, wherein said shell is configured to present one or more items in the data store which share one of said item characteristics.
- 6. The computer system of Claim 1, wherein the shell is configured to present at least a portion of said relational information.
- 7. The computer system of Claim 1, wherein the shell is configured to accept a user input representing a selection to view items in the data store which are related to said selected item.
- 8. The computer system of Claim 7, wherein said relational information corresponding to the selected item includes a set of item characteristics associated with the selected item and wherein said user input represents a selection to view one or more items in the data store which share one of said set of item characteristics with the selected item.

9. A computer-implemented method for presenting related items in a universal data store to a user, the method comprising:

accessing data in said universal data store, wherein said universal data store stores a plurality of items in accordance with a universal data schema, and wherein at least a portion of said plurality of items contain relational information which allows relationships between said plurality of items to be determined;

utilizing said relational information to determine a relationship between a selected item and one or more of the items containing said relational information in the data store; and displaying said selected item and one or more related items to the user.

- 10. The method of Claim 9, wherein the displaying of said selected item and one or more related items includes displaying at least a portion of said relational information to a user.
- 11. The method of Claim 9, wherein said method further comprises receiving a user input representing a selection to view one or more items in the data store which are related to said selected item.
- 12. The method of Claim 11, wherein the displaying of said selected item and one or more related items is responsive to said input.